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ACROSS

1 Commercials

4 "Doo" follower

7 First victim

8 Acrylic fiber

10 Scent

11 Wallowed (in)

13 Sofa, recliner, ottoman, etc.

16 New Guinea port

17 Anti-macassar

18 Spotted, a la Tweety

19 Intend

20 Arm bone

21 Cricket, for one

23 Performs high-tech surgery

25 Sonic —

26 Scoff

27 Elev.

28 Ladd and

30 Shemp's brother

33 Guess-work

36 Jog sans

37 Gambling game

38 Surpass

39 Kill a bill

40 French possessive

41 English cathedral city

DOWN

1 Overhead

2 Actress Moore

3 Smear tactics

4 Slobber

5 Metallic blend

6 Actress Celeste

7 Met melody

8 Utah politico

9 Get snug and cozy

10 The whole enchilada

12 Campus bigwigs

14 Grownup kid

15 Old airline initials

19 Mid-May honoree

20 Work with

21 Cobbler's supply

22 Spud

23 Chain part

24 Exculpate

25 Evil

26 "King of Pop," in headlines

28 Mountain ridge

29 Begins

30 Thurber's dreamer

31 Aware of

32 Id counter-part

34 Tom-tom, e.g.

35 Christmas refrain

Solution time: 21 mins.

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Logan's Run

By Erin Logan



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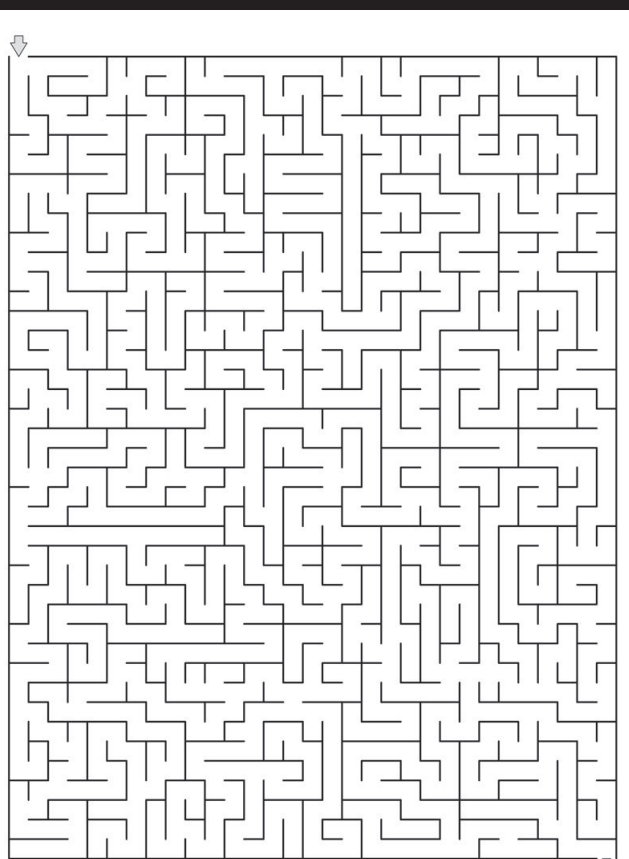
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EOE

PILL POPPIN'

Students use 'smart drugs' to focus, study long into the night

Missy Calvert
senior staff writer

Dead week and finals loom over college students who have procrastinated writing 10-page research papers, finishing group projects and studying for comprehensive exams.

With countless hours dedicated to studying, students turn to study aids. A burst of caffeine from coffee or soda work as common pick-me-ups, but some college students turn to less traditional - not to mention illegal - sources to stay awake.

Adderall and Ritalin, often dubbed as "smart drugs," are used on campuses across the nation to help students stay alert while studying, according to a 2009 npr.org article, "More Students Turning Illegally to 'Smart Drugs.'"

Dr. Larry Moeller of Lafene Health Center said Adderall and Ritalin are brain stimulants prescribed to help persons with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

"These medications help the ADHD person focus and concentrate more effectively on their tasks/projects," Moeller said. "It does not make them smarter but gives them more access to their smarts by helping brain cells do 'their business' better."

According to oas.samhsa.gov, a 2006-2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, found that 6.4 percent of full-time college students between 18 and 22 reported using Adderall non-medically in the year prior to the survey, as compared to 3 percent of their counterparts who are not full-time students.

These drugs can also be used to treat sleeping disorders like narcolepsy, according to WebMD.com, another reason some college students take them when they need to stay awake for long periods of time to study.

However, consuming Adderall or Ritalin without a prescription is illegal. Moeller said only people who have been diagnosed and tested via a psychologist or psychiatrist should use these drugs.

"Using these medications without that diagnosis is not proper and, in fact, is illegal," Moeller said.

Andy* is a senior who has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. Andy said he usually takes his prescribed dose of Adderall on weekdays to help him focus.

"The main benefits for me would be that it increases my concentration, and it also helps to keep me on track," he said.

While Andy said he typically takes

his prescription dose, he said he has taken more Adderall to help him stay up all night, especially when he has procrastinated on an assignment.

"What I do if I'm staying up all night is I'll take my routine dose and then around 1 or 2 a.m., I'll take another one, and then I'll take the dose for the next day at the same time I usually take it," he said. "So there is no real drop, it is just a constancy of the effects."

He said the extra boost from the medicine helps him pull all-nighters, but the sleep deprivation is not enjoyable.

"When the effects wear off, you get even more tired," he said. "It's not much fun and I don't like doing it."

Moeller said taking Adderall or Ritalin could have other negative results as well.

"Adverse effects can include appetite loss, sleep disturbance, upset stomach, mood problems, nervousness, agitation, fast heart rate, dizziness, dry mouth and even psychosis," he said.

Moeller said the medications could also cause severe illness and possibly even death.

Adderall and Ritalin are amphetamine-based, which means they can be addictive, according to the npr.org article.

Caffeine is also a brain stimulant that can help people focus, Moeller said. The main differences are its legality without a prescription and the lesser side effects like agitation, disturbed sleep and frequent urination.

"Too much brain, heart, gut and kidney stimulation can be annoying and uncomfortable but not fatal as an overdose of Adderall or Ritalin occasionally can be," Moeller said.

Brittani Shank, sophomore in family studies and human services, said she consumes soft drinks to stay alert while studying.

"It helps me in my studying by keeping me focused because if I get distracted, I just take a drink and keep going," she said. "It keeps me refreshed - although I know I should be drinking water - and keeps me on task most of the time."

Shank said she usually drinks at least two 32 oz of pop - usually Pepsi - per day during finals week. The amount of caffeine she consumes can have minor negative effects, Shank said, like keeping her from getting some much needed shut-eye.

"Sometimes it will make me jittery or unable to keep my legs still," Shank said.



Erin Poppe | Collegian

A "Finals Week Cocktail." Students use substances such as Adderall pills, energy drinks, herbal energy pills and caffeine in order to stay from sleep during finals week.

Julie Gibbs, director of health promotions at Lafene, said exercise is a healthy option for helping students focus and stay awake during finals.

"It might help to take a brisk walk or jog if you're starting to fall asleep while studying," Gibbs said. "Also, by making exercise part of your daily routine, studies show more individuals are able to get better sleep."

Moeller said he enjoys partnering with ADHD patients who can benefit from Adderall or Ritalin because the medications "can make learning a joy instead of a grind," but he said abusing the drugs is a felony.

"I charge each (person) with protecting their medication from theft, loss or 'hungry dogs,'" he said. "If such events happen more than once, I am no longer their partner."

Music found helpful for studying

Parker Wilhelm
staff writer

It's not uncommon to see someone listening to music while they go about their daily lives. With the convenience of portable MP3 players and Internet radio, more people are given the ability to listen to their favorite tunes than ever before. Many college students already use music as a way to concentrate on their work and studies.

However, according to a research study released on March 25 from Osaka University's Graduate School of Medicine in Japan, such active listening could go beyond maintaining focus and help lower blood pressure and reduce stress.

The study showed subjects who incorporated more music into their lives saw a decrease in blood pressure in as little as three months.

Similar results were noticed in subjects who were tested for the effects of more laughter in their routine. This led the study to conclude that there is a correlation between listening to music and lowered blood pressure, which in turn lowers stress and improves a person's overall health.

The study has a rather fortuitous time to be released. With finals just around the corner for most students at K-State, it can be a very stressful time filled with late nights, cram sessions and general frustration.

According to the American Institute of Stress, too much stress can have a negative impact on a person's health, including increased blood pressure, an inability to concentrate and, in some cases, headaches.

Richard Harris, professor of psychology, said listening to music can be a useful form of stress relief.

"Music can either calm or arouse you, depending on what kind of music it is and what your tastes are," Harris said. "Music that someone enjoys and is not too fast may in fact be a useful stress reducer, as long as it doesn't put you to sleep, which soothing music can sometimes do."

Many students often listen to music while they study. Walk into any campus library or study hall and it is almost guaranteed that one will find a majority of people with earphones plugged in. Depending on each person's taste, music can help boost concentration, raise alertness and lower

tension, which all help assist a student's learning.

While music can be a useful aid in studying, Harris said some kinds of music could also be distracting.

"Background music while studying is best instrumental, rather than vocal, so it doesn't interfere with the verbal activity of reading," he said.

Songs heavy in lyrics or unfamiliar to the listener can disrupt reading simultaneously. This can be tested by trying to listen to a talk show or podcast while trying to read a passage of text. However, mostly instrumental music or music that is firmly implanted in the listener's memory is less likely to distract.

With many college students about to begin crunching for finals, now is a better time than ever to keep the headphones on hand. With music being shown to reduce stress as well as boost concentration, students can effectively make use of a study aid that they already have on hand and actively revel in on a regular basis.

"If (music) is something you enjoy and find relaxing, it is probably good for stress management," Harris said.

HOROSCOPES

- ♎ Libra Sept. 23 - Oct. 22**
Some people see dead week as an opportunity to catch up in classes; you are different. You see it as an opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy a nice cold beer.
- ♈ Aries March 21 - April 19**
If you are graduating, make the most your college experience. Make sure you leave a lasting impression.
- ♊ Gemini May 21 - June 20**
In a final essay or paper, include in the middle a sentiment that means something to you to make sure your teacher is paying attention.
- ♋ Cancer June 21 - July 22**
With graduation comes a new outfit. Wear one like Thor's, since you'll be feeling superhuman the day of graduation.
- ♉ Taurus April 20 - May 20**
Studying is important, but then again, so is mowing your lawn, and you don't find yourself doing that very often, do you?
- ♏ Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21**
Graduation is quickly approaching. Why not take this chance to do some 'graduation crashing'? No one parties like it's their last quite like college graduates.
- ♍ Sagittarius Nov. 22 - Dec. 21**
Don't let the pile of work you need to finish keep you from going outside. It's where you will find the most reward from your studies.
- ♏ Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 19**
While you have no work to tend to this week, next week will be a nightmare for you. Live it up while you can.
- ♊ Pisces Feb. 19 - March 20**
The summer is fast approaching. Splurge on summer outfits. Just don't tell your parents.
- ♌ Leo July 21 - Aug. 22**
Now is your time to live in the moment, so do something crazy. Start a water fight with your roommates, walk at graduation barefoot - it doesn't matter what you do, just do it.
- ♏ Virgo Aug. 23 - Sept. 22**
This week, you feel like the only person with multiple projects due. Don't get frustrated, because next week you can rub your lack of to-do-list in people's faces.

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Daniel Thomas Drafted



Sean Frye

On Friday, former K-State running back Daniel Thomas was selected in the second round of the NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins as the 62nd overall pick. The pick extended K-State's streak of having a player taken in the NFL Draft to 18 years, the third longest in the Big 12 behind the Texas Longhorns and the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

"I am excited about anybody who has the opportunity to do that and certainly with Daniel because he is a very deserving young man," said K-State football head coach Bill Snyder. "He is just a wonderful youngster. Humility is a great asset for him. He is as durable as anyone that plays the game and I do not know where all of the recent talk of him being injury-prone came from. He is going to be absolutely fine. He was very durable for us."

Thomas has arguably landed himself in one of the best positions he could possibly find during this time of uncertainty with the lockout. There are currently two other running backs that have expired contracts with the Dolphins: Ronnie Brown and Ricky Williams. Brown's production with the team has been stellar, but many people say his return to the team is unlikely due to his unhappiness with the organization. Brown was kept off the field late in the season and many people speculate that the team did so in order to prevent him from obtaining a contract incentive.

Ricky Williams' return isn't likely either. That leaves a gaping hole for Thomas to come into and possibly take a starting job on a team that relies on the run game.

Another reason the Dolphins are the perfect fit for Thomas is the offensive system the Dolphins run. During Thomas' time at K-State, Snyder implemented the Wildcat offense, which features the running back taking the snap in the shotgun formation with the quarterback lined up as a receiver. The Dolphins also utilize this offense and are the team that made it famous in the NFL, as they were the first team to heavily rely on it.

With that being said, Thomas will be able to pick up at least one aspect of the Dolphins' offensive scheme relatively easy, giving him a huge advantage over most rookie running backs in the league.

Finally, Thomas gets to go back to his home state and train there during a time of uncertainty due to the NFL lockout. Nobody knows when the lockout will conclude, as the NFL owners and players are now at a stage where they are battling it out in court. Players are not allowed to sign contracts with their teams, so all the rookies in the league are in the same sort of limbo state that the free agents are in.

The nice thing about Thomas' situation is that he gets to go home to one of the biggest vacation spots in the country. He is a native of Hilliard, Fla., which is part of the Jacksonville metro area. While he awaits his fate, he'll enjoy the nice weather and likely spend plenty of time with his family while training to become a Dolphin. If anything, the lockout will give Thomas plenty of time to rest his hamstring, which has been a point of speculation since the NFL Draft combine.

Sean Frye is a XXX in XXX. Please send comments to sports@spub.ksu.edu

COMEBACK CATS

Wildcats beat Roadrunners despite being down

John Kurtz
senior staff writer

A night of ups and downs got K-State back on the winning track with an 8-6 win over Cal-State Bakersfield Tuesday night at Tointon Family Stadium. The Wildcats fell behind early, took control in the middle innings and had to rely on the lights-out combination of relievers Evan Marshall and James Allen to pick up their 27th win of the year.

After falling behind 1-0 in the top of the first, the Wildcats responded with five runs in their first two at bats to grab a lead that provided some cushion for K-State starter Shane Conlon. Then K-State took their foot off the gas.

"After we got five we kind of laid down just a little bit," K-State head coach Brad Hill said. "Then they battled back into it."

The Roadrunners came back with a run in the fourth that forced Conlon out of the game in favor of Kayvon Bahramzadeh. In the fifth, Bahramzadeh was taken out for a mistake when Cal-State Bakersfield's Martin Medina launched a two-run home run, cutting the Wildcats lead to one.

K-State couldn't work around a leadoff double given up to Cal-State Bakersfield's DC Legg in the sixth. Lefty reliever Jared Moore was brought in to try and strand Legg and protect the Wildcat lead, but Kevin Younger came through with the game tying RBI single for the



Anthony Drath | Collegian

Second baseman, **Jake Brown**, turns a double play successfully against Cal State Bakersfield Tuesday evening in Tointon Family Stadium.

Roadrunners.

The Wildcats got it back an inning later in the bottom of the seventh. It started with Nick Martini reaching base after being hit by a pitch. Jason King then hammered a fastball into right-center for the eventual game winning RBI triple that scored Martini to give the Wildcats the lead for good at 6-5.

"I was just trying to get something up," King said. "To hit a pitch like that,

you've got to see it up and I was lucky to get one and put a good swing on it."

King then scored on a wild pitch to provide extra insurance.

"That was big for (King) to get the big hit," Hill said. "Then we got a little fortunate to get that big second run in with the wild pitch, but we got it done."

Reliever Evan Marshall picked up the win for the Wildcats after entering the game with two outs in the

top of the sixth. Marshall pitched two and one-third innings of scoreless baseball in his first appearance on the mound in over a week.

Marshall turned the game over to star closer James Allen in the ninth with the Wildcats holding on to an 8-5 lead. Allen allowed a two-out RBI double to the Roadrunners' Jeremy Rodriguez, but the final Roadrunner rally of the day ended there and Allen recorded his 15th

save of the season.

K-State is now 3-0 on the season against the Roadrunners after taking home a two game sweep in Bakersfield last week. The win snapped a two-game losing streak after the Wildcats were swept in a rain-shortened series at Oklahoma State last weekend.

The Wildcats and Roadrunners go at it one more time tonight at Tointon Family Stadium. First pitch is set for 6:30 p.m.

Rowing team part of two conferences



Matt Binter | Collegian

The K-State first Varsity-8 rower boat races against KU in the last race of the Sunflower Showdown last fall. The boat won with a time of 6:20.85.

Sean Frye
Junior Staff Writer

It's no secret that K-State is a member of the Big 12 Conference for athletic competitions. However, in rowing, the final competition of the year is the Conference-USA Championships in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The question then arises, why does the crew race for both a Big 12 and a C-USA title?

It comes down to the path that all women's crews are taking to get to the NCAA Championships.

Starting in 2013, the NCAA will begin an automatic qualifying process to determine which crews will make the field of 16-teams in the women's rowing championships. The qualifications to make the NCAA Championships beginning then will be an automatic invitation to the winner of a conference with at least six teams. A team must also have been a member of that conference for at least two seasons before it is eligible to be considered for automatic qualification within the conference.

As of right now, the Big 12

only has four varsity women's rowing teams. Many of the schools have club teams, but there are no immediate plans to add two teams to Texas, Oklahoma, K-State and Kansas to make the Big 12 an eligible conference.

"Women's rowing started in 1997 in the NCAA and it's been an emerging sport," said K-State head coach Patrick Sweeney. "Something like only 100 teams have it as a varsity sport, while 200 have it at the club level."

Because the Big 12 will not have enough teams to be eligible for automatic qualification, they teamed up with Conference USA and the South Eastern Conference to form a nine-team conference. In addition to the four teams from the Big 12 and the Tennessee Volunteers from the SEC, C-USA brings the competition of Central Florida, Alabama, Tulsa and Southern Methodist into the mix.

"What we did was we combined all these schools so we could have an affiliated rowing conference that was eligible for automatic qualifiers," Sweeney said. "Because there are a lot of conferences all over the country that

only have two or four varsity teams, so they wouldn't be eligible."

The NCAA currently selects the 16-team field by committee, similar to the national basketball tournament. In the future, the committee will still select some teams to fill at-large bids to fill the competition outside of conference winners.

"It was by committee that used to select the teams for the NCAAAs," Sweeney said. "They would do it based off these three regional competitions; the Pac-10's, the East Coast Ivy League competition and then a conglomerate competition in the Midwest region."

With four teams, the Big 12 is close to being eligible on their own. However, the two most talented club-level teams in the conference are Nebraska and Colorado, who are bolting for the Big 10 and the Pacific-10 respectively.

"It's really a shame that those two schools are leaving, because they have such great talent," Sweeney said. "To be honest though, I think everybody involved is comfortable with the situation we are in with Conference-USA."

K-State Rugby Ends Season in Elite Eight

Sean Frye
Junior Staff Writer

Another successful season for the K-State Fort Riley Rugby Football Club has come to a close. The team finished with a 7-3 overall record during the spring season and made it to the Division I rugby Elite Eight in Blaine, Minn. Their season ended in a 46-5 loss to the Davenport Panthers from Grand Rapids, Mich.

"It sucked to lose to them," said senior team captain and club president Kenny Scott. "It sucks, but it happens. We had a really good season."

On Friday, K-State played the Texas State Bobcats in the Sweet 16 and won 10-5. The usually high-octane offense of K-State was limited by bad weather as well as good defensive play from the Bobcats.

"Our forwards did really well," Scott said. "Due to weather conditions, which were really windy and rainy, the ball was really wet so we had trouble moving it around on offense. We were alright without scoring that much though, we were just happy to win."

K-State advanced to the Elite Eight and prepared to face the Panthers, who had beaten the Minnesota Gophers 27-0 in order to face the Wildcats. The Panthers pounced on K-State early and took a 6-0 lead off of two penalty kicks and never looked back from there. Their size and overall talent level was simply better than K-State's which was reflected in the final score. Nonetheless, the Wildcats went home feeling proud about their season.

"Davenport was very organized and had good ball

movement," Scott said. "They were bigger and had a lot better speed than us. It was just their day. A lot of things went right for them that didn't for us. I think we had a great season though and I'm really proud of our guys."

Despite the loss that ended K-State's run, the team had many good wins throughout the year. They outscored Big 12 teams 245-38 over the course of four games against Oklahoma State, Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas. They beat Nebraska 94-0 and KU 69-5 in their last home game of the year.

"We had a really good season I thought," Scott said. "We did a lot of things right, I just think it was sad to see it end."

While Scott will be on the team for one last semester this fall, many of the players saw their college rugby careers end on Sunday.

"I've been playing with a lot of these guys for a long time and a lot of them were kind of sad to see it all end," Scott said. "I think the feeling was that we were starting to come together and really play well this year, that it just ended too soon. Like I said though we had a really great season and we were glad that we were able to go to Minnesota and not lose the first game."

Another positive trend that occurred this season was the number of fans that came to see the team play. On most home dates, K-State saw upwards of 200 people in the stands at Memorial Stadium.

"I really want to thank all the fans that came out this year," Scott said. "They really came out and supported us and it was great."

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300 Employment/Careers

310 Help Wanted

THE COLLEGIAN cannot verify the financial potential of advertisements in the Employment/ Opportunities classifications. Readers are advised to approach any such business opportunity with reasonable caution. The Collegian urges our readers to contact the Better Business Bureau, 501 SE Jefferson, Topeka, KS 66607-1190. **785-232-0454.**

ASSISTANT COORDINATOR: KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY. New Student Services. Job Requirements: Bachelor's degree and at least one year of experience supervising undergraduate students. Preferred qualifications and skills include a Master's degree, excellent written and verbal communication skills, experience in public speaking, training undergraduates and peers, and communication planning, implementing and evaluating programs, and applicable experience with student data systems and/ or CRM software. Salary range is \$34,000. Send letter of application, resume or vita and contact information for three work-related references to Search Committee, KSU, New Student Services, 122 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506. Screening will begin May 13 and continue until the position is filled. For more information, call **785-532-6237.** KSU is an Equal Opportunity Employer and actively seeks diversity among its employees. Background check required. Paid for by Kansas State University.

310 Help Wanted

BARTENDING! \$300 a day potential. No experience necessary. Training provided. Call **800-965-6520** extension 144.

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Sudoku

★★★★★

4				7				
6		3						
				1	2			
	9					6	8	
								3
	7	1			3	5		
				4			9	7
								1

brainfreezepuzzles.com

Rules: Fill in the grid so that each row, column, and 3x3 block contains 1-9 exactly once.

1	8	5	2	4	6	3	7	9
7	9	6	3	5	1	4	2	8
2	4	3	7	8	9	5	1	6
5	1	2	9	7	8	6	3	4
8	7	4	5	6	3	2	9	1
6	3	9	1	2	4	7	8	5
4	5	7	8	1	2	9	6	3
9	6	8	4	3	7	1	5	2
3	2	1	6	9	5	7	4	8

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To Place An Ad

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Categories

000 Bulletin Board

100 Housing/Real Estate

200 Service Directory

300 Employment/Careers

400 Open Market

500 Transportation

600 Travel/Trips

FOOD | Sites provide safety information

Continued from page 1

I obviously can't sneak into their kitchens." Very true, but fortunately there are a couple of better options you can explore.

As smart consumers, first we need to be proactive while dining, not only with allergens and calorie content, but also with food recalls. Spare a few minutes to visit www.fda.gov and sign-up for recalls and safety alerts through email. It is free and keeps you updated about product recalls and safety alerts in retail food stores and restaurants.

Secondly, look up your state's Department of Agriculture website, like ksda.gov if you live in Kansas, and skim through the food safety and lodging inspection reports. Sometimes you will be surprised to find your favorite restaurant's name in previous years' food safety violations

list. Names of food outlets with multiple, recurring food safety violations will appear with red flags that tell you "don't eat here!"

Spreading the word also goes a long way in creating awareness. Next time, have a chat with that friend of yours working in Subway - or Houlihan's for that matter - about the importance of hygienic employee practices and its impact on food safety, (it wouldn't sound as weird as you think). And who knows, your friend might get ideas from you.

After all, the simplest and perhaps the most effective way to reduce food-borne illnesses is to ensure, as Robert Tauxe, executive of the Centre for Disease Control said, that "everyone who is preparing my and your and everyone's lunch this very minute has first washed their hands with soap."

So, happy eating.

RALLY | Counsel voices frustration with city

Continued from page 1

as the Manhattan law does.

"Kansas Equality Coalition is the leading political organization pushing for LGBT rights in the state of Kansas," Rovenstein said, "We want to pass a similar law in Wichita which is why we're here supporting this one."

Pedro Irigonegaray serves as counsel for the Kansas Equality Coalition and spoke at the rally. While he praised the Christians in attendance, he declared himself to be an atheist.

"Like many other heterosexuals, we stand with you because this is a civil rights issue," Irigonegaray said, "Other than faith-based bigotry wrapped in prayer, there's no reason for gay marriage to be banned in the Kansas constitution."

Irigonegaray said that it if was deemed necessary, supporters should organize an economic boycott to show the impact of the LGBT community.

Rovenstein summarized the issue by saying, "Your new city council is wasting a lot of time."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Saudi Arabia keeps female voting ban

Recently, Saudi Arabia opened registration for the second municipal elections, initially scheduled for Oct. 31, 2009, but delayed on the grounds that the authorities "needed time to expand the electorate and study the possibility of allowing women to vote." The first such elections were held in 2005 when women were excluded.

It took a year-and-a-half before the epiphany finally struck and the delay was ended; women, it was decided to the chagrin of human rights advocates, would not be permitted to vote this time either.

Nevertheless, the ban hasn't swayed a number of intrepid Saudi women from taking to voter registration centers in major cities to push for their right to register to vote.

"You fear God and you love your country. Why won't you let us participate?" one of the women asked the male officials in charge of a center in the capital city, Riyadh.

"There is no article in the system denying us the right to cast our vote," proclaimed another.

Laws and acts discriminating against women must end, say the women, particularly since the Kingdom has signed international agreements prohibiting such prejudice.

In Saudi Arabia, my homeland, women are prohibited from traveling or working without the written consent of their male guardians, banned from the ballot box and not permitted to drive.

Two misconceptions vis-à-vis Saudi women are ordinarily mentioned in the Western media. The first is that such sexist practices are relics of the

Islamic faith. However, this notion belies well-known historical facts.

During the early centuries of Islam, women were granted the right to participate in the political process and all other aspects of life. However, the current brand of Islam applied in the oil-rich Saudi Kingdom is fueled by an austere, convoluted interpretation of Shari'ah, or Islamic Law, at times at odds with Islam in its pure form.

The other Western misreading of the Saudi social environment is that the government is single-handedly accountable for the ostracization of Saudi women, an ill-informed opinion to anyone familiar with Saudi society.

Men and on occasion women, have been intransigent in their opposition to gender parity, concerned that any hints of compromise, such as allowing women to pilot a car, would open the floodgates of promiscuity in the profoundly conservative Kingdom. As an example, when two young women made attempts this week to register to vote, they were subjected by some of the public to a broad spectrum of insults, ranging from "unoriginal and impure Saudis" to "attention seekers" to "whores." They were told "to stay home and raise kids," and in some cases thought to warrant legal prosecution.

What at heart engenders such narrow-minded viewpoints?

As a Saudi Arabian national, I attest to the extremely narrow interpretation of the Qur'an and the Prophet's actions, called Sunnah, that are inculcated into us from an early age in schools and Friday

sermons, and through fatwas (religious rulings) and lectures disseminated through books and AV media. The doctrines promulgated devoted no small part to the subject of women, their rudimentary role in society and the protection of their honor.

Less than a week ago, a woman called a prominent sheikh during his TV show, reporting that her brother had sexually harassed his own daughter. The outcome? Rather than advising the caller to immediately report the sexually abusive father to the police, the cleric spared the father 90 percent of the blame and instead, based on pure conjecture, lambasted the molested girl for the manner in which "she dresses around her father," for "spending time alone with him" and for all the sexual provocation that her erogenous actions could evoke in the father who, after all, is "a man" with desire.

Compounded by the 2006 Qatif Girl saga, in which a kidnapped and gang-raped Saudi girl was, for having been in a car alone with unrelated male, sentenced to 200 lashes and six months in jail (later to be pardoned by the King), the sheikh's response epitomizes the prism through which Saudi women are seen: the presumption of guilt in a wrong committed by man is usually attributed to some woman's sinful conduct.

Notwithstanding entreaties from women's rights activists to open up more job opportunities for women, a recent fatwa was issued to render impermissible the employment of women as clerks in supermarkets due to "un-Islamic sex mingling."

Yet, amid the bleak clouds of deep-seated misogynic societal convictions, strict policing by the religious establishment, and fatwas further curtailing women's liberties, a ray of sunshine may be working its way to the top.

Having witnessed the far-reaching impact of social media in neighboring Arab countries, Saudi women have begun taking to Facebook and Twitter to make their voices heard.

Saudi Women Revolution (SWR) is a fast-growing women's rights movement in a culture where women's rights largely remain an alien concept, asserting time and again their demands work in tandem with Shari'ah Law, while calling for equality with their male counterparts.

For his part, a progressive King Abdullah has exhibited support when, in the face of vociferous outcries from conservatives, he inaugurated King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), the first co-ed institute in the Kingdom.

The future of gender equality in Saudi society therefore rests first and foremost in the hands of its women. To be sure, it will take considerable time and effort to undo decades of rigid interpretation and application of religion, but if you don't fight for your rights, no one else will.

This round of municipal elections is a good place to start.

Zaki Safar
former president of the
Colorado State University
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